

Predation on the Common Sun Skink, *Eutropis multifasciata* (Kuhl, 1820), by the Sunbeam Snake, *Xenopeltis unicolor* (Reinwardt, 1827), in Sarawak, Borneo

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Eutropis multifasciata is a forest-dwelling lizard broadly distributed in forested and disturbed habitats across Southeast Asia. It is associated with leaf litter and anthropogenic structures and occurs abundantly in primary and secondary lowland forests, mangroves, peat swamps, plantations, and clearings (Das, 2010). It is often found in urban environments, basking in sun spots or sheltering under rotting logs, in the leaf litter, and in tree buttresses. As typical of skinks, the species is agile and tends to escape when approached, making it difficult to track. Regardless of these strategies skinks are known prey of snakes, birds, and lizards (e.g., Karunarathna et al., 2017; Franco and Minggu, 2019). *Eutropis multifasciata* has been reported as prey of *Varanus dalubhasa* Welton et al., 2014 (Dela Cruz and Abuid, 2017) and also as prey of *Lycodon capucinus* H. Boie in F. Boie, 1827 (O'Shea et al., 2018). *Xenopeltis unicolor* is a member of the snake family Xenopeltidae, widespread in Southeast Asia and attaining a length up to 1 m. It is nocturnal and fossorial and commonly encountered on the ground near water bodies (Das, 2010).

The following observations were made during a field study on the life history of *E. multifasciata* at the Sebungan Oil Palm Estate, Bintulu, Sarawak, Malaysia (3.1653°N, 113.3544°E, WGS84, elevation 14 m). An adult male *E. multifasciata*, with snout-vent length (SVL) 108.7 mm, total length (TL) 255.4 mm, and weight 40 g, was fitted with a temperature-sensitive radio transmitter (Holohil BD-2; weight 1.4 g, frequency

219.054; Fig. 1) on the scapular region (for the radio-tracking protocol, see Wong and Das, 2020). It was released at the point of capture on 30 August 2022 and tracked daily for collection of data related to movement and thermal behaviour. On 17 September 2022, transmitter signals were received from an area covered with dry palm leaves along a ditch (Fig. 2A). Between 18 September 2022 and 21 September 2022, the skink was not sighted, and only modest (2.5–16.0 m) daily displacements and body temperature (22–31°C) were recorded using the transmitter.



Figure 1. Adult male *Eutropis multifasciata* fitted with a Holohil BD-2 radio transmitter at Sebungan Oil Palm Estate, Sarawak, Malaysia. Photo by Thanisha Kumar.

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